

WASHINGTON, DC –Legislation by Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) to transfer ownership of the Cape Arago Lighthouse to the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians passed the House of Representatives today by voice vote.

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“This bill transfers to the Confederated Tribes a piece of land which has significant cultural, historic, and spiritual importance,” said DeFazio. “The Coast Guard no longer needs the Cape Arago Lighthouse for navigation purposes and this will put an historic piece of land to good use while protecting and preserving its cultural significance.”

The Cape Arago Lighthouse was built in 1934 and is located near Charleston on tiny Chief's Island. The Coast Guard permits the Confederated Tribes to use the site for tribal ceremonies and as a cemetery but it is closed to the public. The Tribes have sought ownership since 1991 to restore and preserve the site. However, the U.S. Department of the Interior maintains that the tribes do not qualify to assume ownership under the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act.